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Making prevention matter: A survey of child sexual abuse prevention programs in Australia

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Establishing Characteristics of Effective Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs

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Background



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Establishing Characteristics of Effective
Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs.

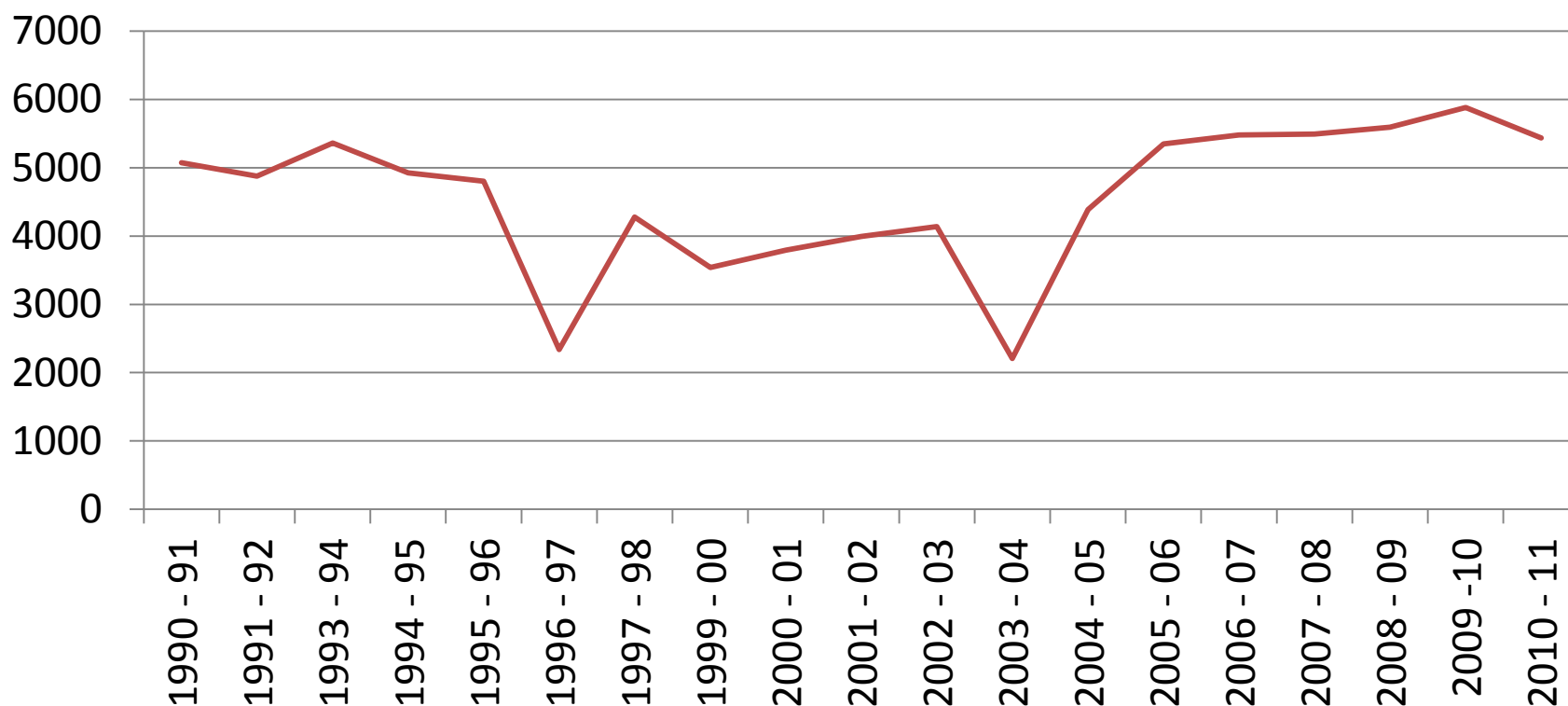


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1. Official incidence of child sexual abuse in Australia – not declining
2. AIFS study – a catalyst
3. Coverage in school curricula – patchy!

#1 Official incidence

Child sexual abuse substantiations after investigations Australia 1990 - 2011

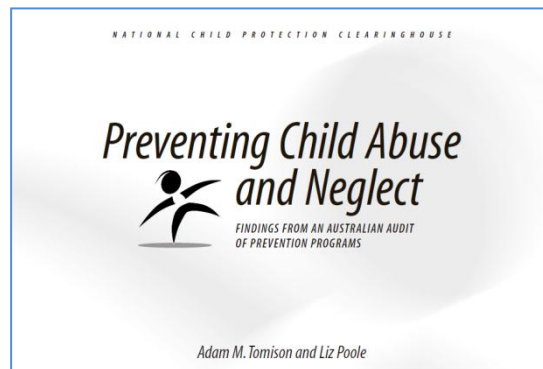


#2 AIFS study

- *Preventing child abuse and neglect: Findings from an Australian audit of prevention programs* by Adam Tomison & Liz Poole (2000)
 - Data collected in 1999
 - 181 personal safety or protective behaviours programs identified
 - 2/3 based on protective behaviours model
 - 55% primary prevention programs

AIFS study

- Data collected in 1999
- 181 programs
 - School-aged children
 - 55% primary prevention



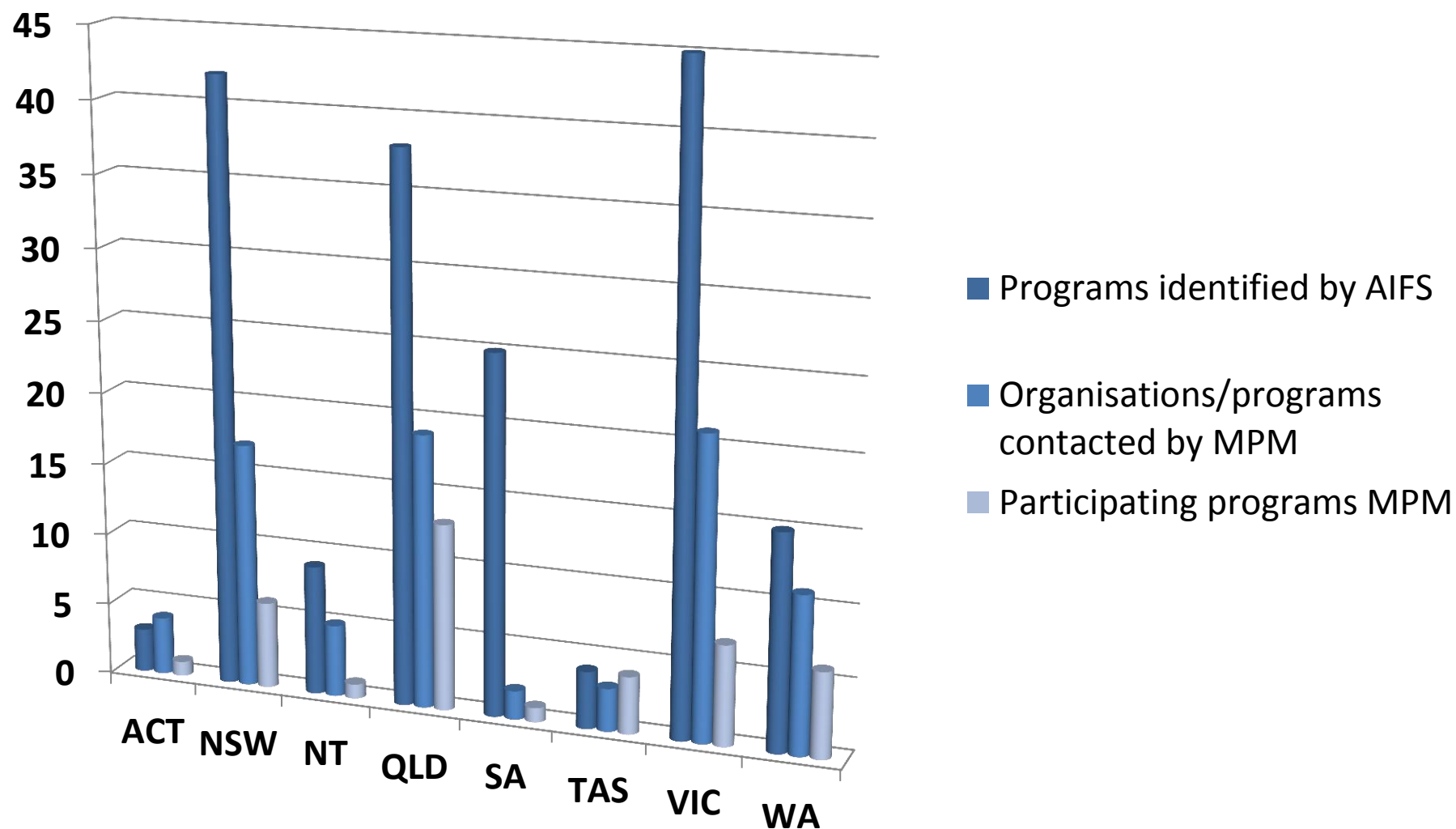
MPM study

- Data collected in 2011-12
- 39 programs
 - Primary school-aged children
 - 100% primary prevention



Establishing Characteristics of Effective Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Programs

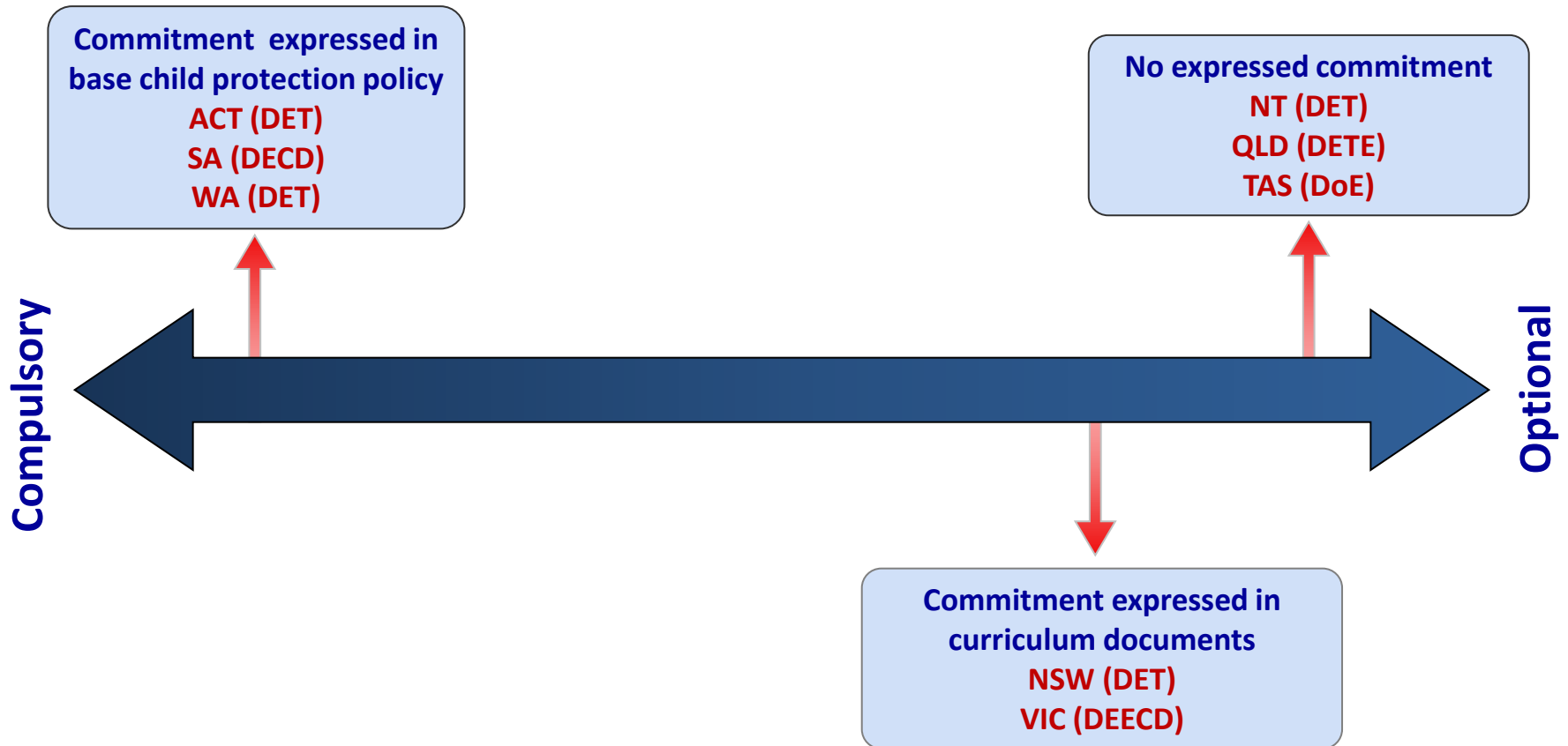
Comparison: AIFS and MPM participating programs



#3 Coverage in school curricula

- Does the base policy mention child sexual abuse prevention education?
 - ACT, SA & WA only
- Does a dedicated child sexual abuse prevention education policy exist ?
 - No states
- Is teaching of child sexual abuse prevention education optional or compulsory?
 - See next slide
- Where is child sexual abuse prevention education located in the primary school curriculum?
 - Generally in the health curriculum

Is teaching of child sexual abuse prevention education optional or compulsory?



Sexual abuse prevention programs: The evidence



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Should we teach child sexual abuse prevention?

- What is the evidence?
 - Children can and do learn prevention concepts when exposed to high quality programs (Finkelhor, 2007)
 - Evidence about whether programs actually reduce child sexual abuse is lacking (Mikton & Butchart, 2009)
 - Younger children benefit more (Rispen, Aleman & Goudena, 1997) but gains are not as pronounced at later follow up
 - Older children benefit more (Zwi et al., 2008)
 - Children from lower SES groups benefit most immediately (Rispen, Aleman & Goudena, 1997) but longer term retention is poor
 - Children from lower SES groups made least progress and had poorer retention rates (Briggs & Hawkins, 1996)
 - Gender, age, race and academic achievement do not affect improvement in knowledge or skills (Briggs & Hawkins, 1994)

Successful program components

- Active behavioural skill training in role plays as opposed to passive modes characteristic of films or teacher-talk
- Explicit instruction about core concepts such as body ownership, touch, and secrecy
- Sufficient time for uptake of new skills and concepts
- Information in small increments
- Repeated exposure
- Group participation rather than individual instruction; standardised materials
- Integration with school curriculum
- Parental involvement
- Trained instructors

(Davis & Gidycz, 2000; Rispens et al., 1997; Sanderson, 2004; Zwi et al., 2008)

Study details



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- Survey data collection: July 2011 – April 2012
- Data collected from 39 separate programs.
- Respondents included:
 - 3 Coordinators
 - 10 Facilitators
 - 24 Joint Coordinator / Facilitators

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Characteristics of respondents



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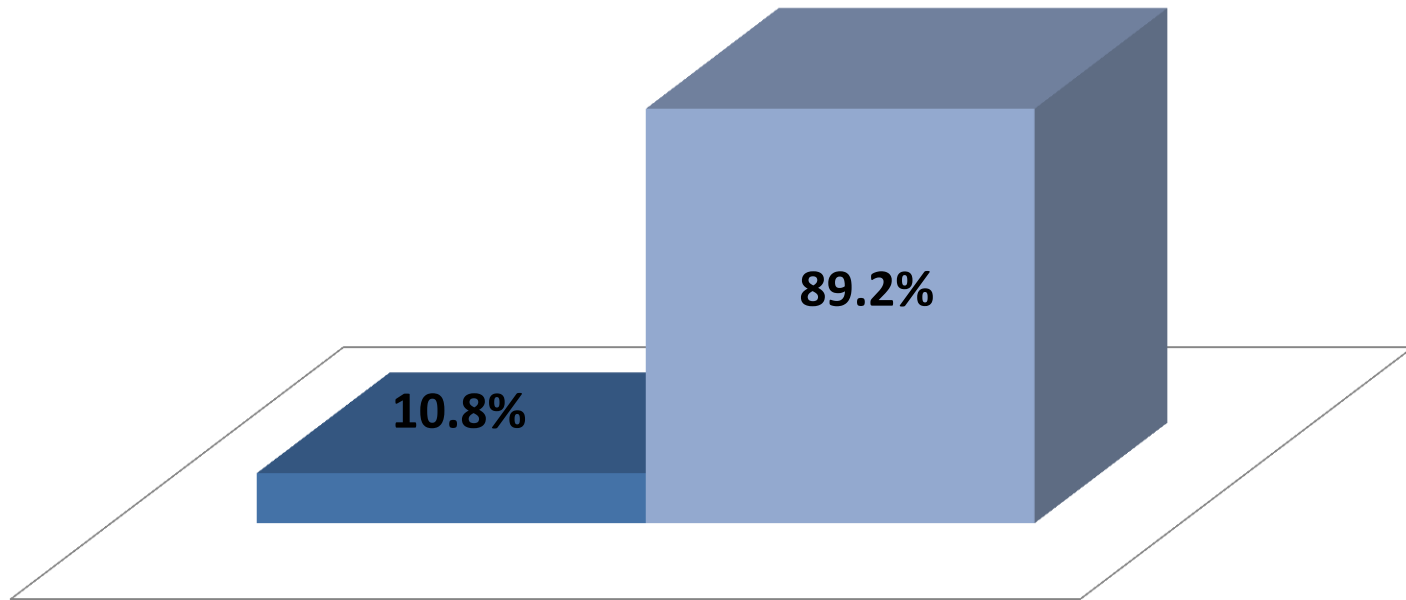


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Gender

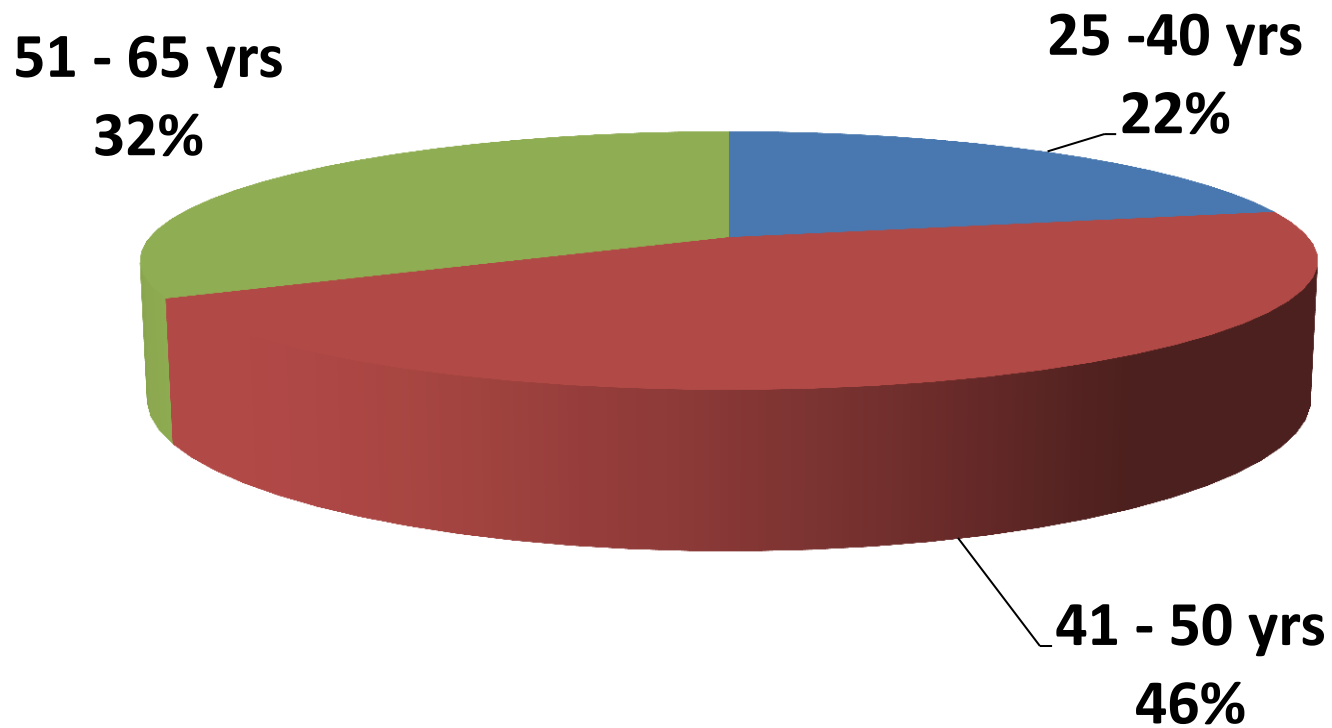


Gender

■ Male ■ Female

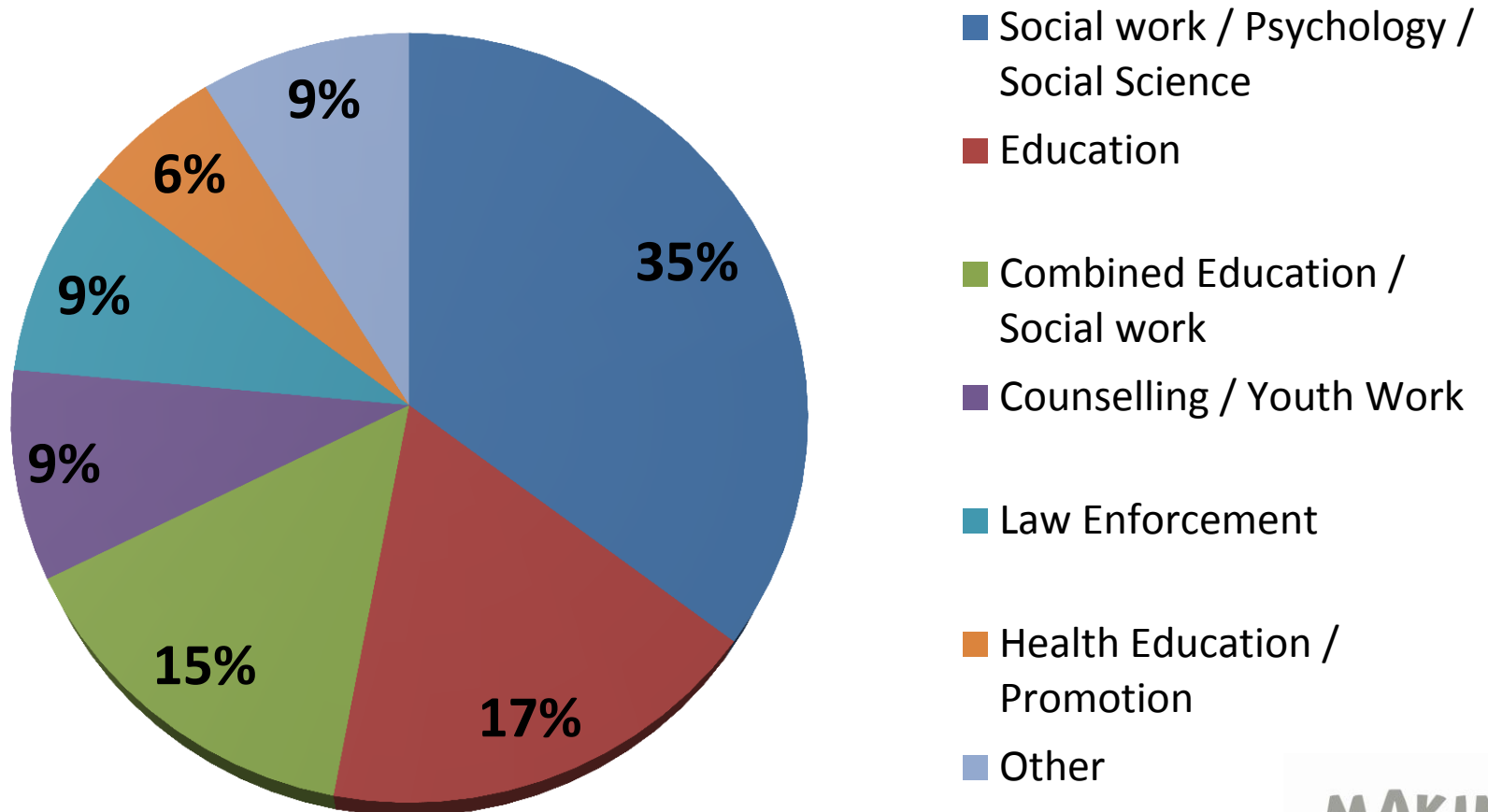
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Age



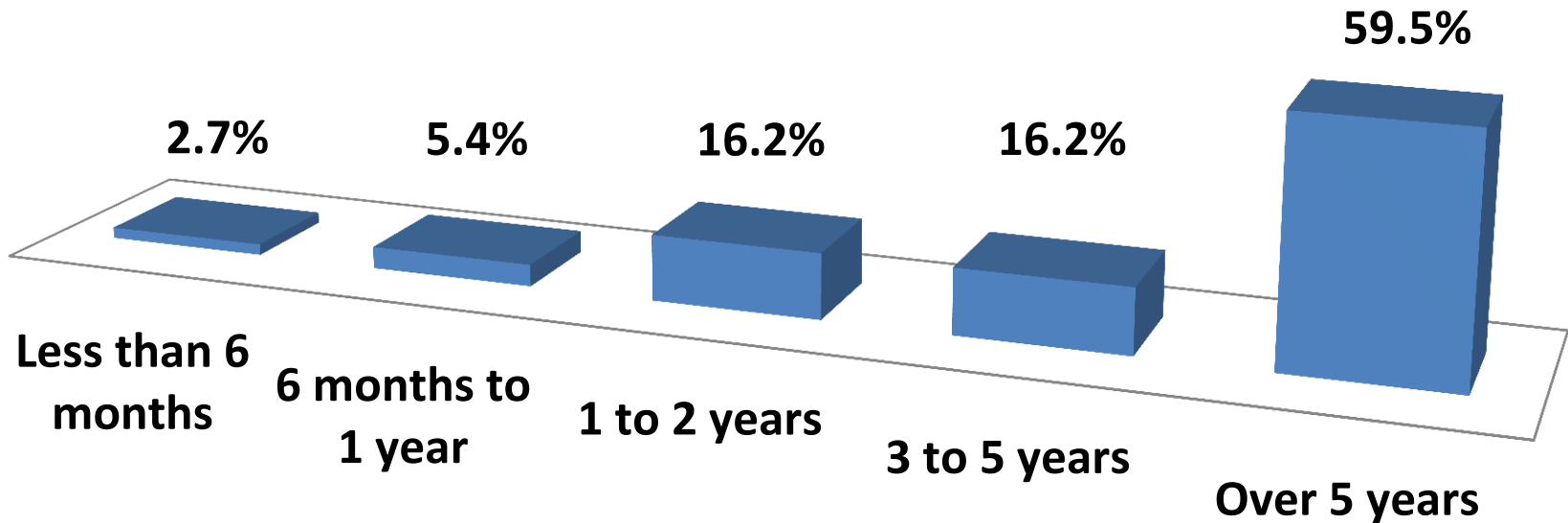
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Disciplinary background



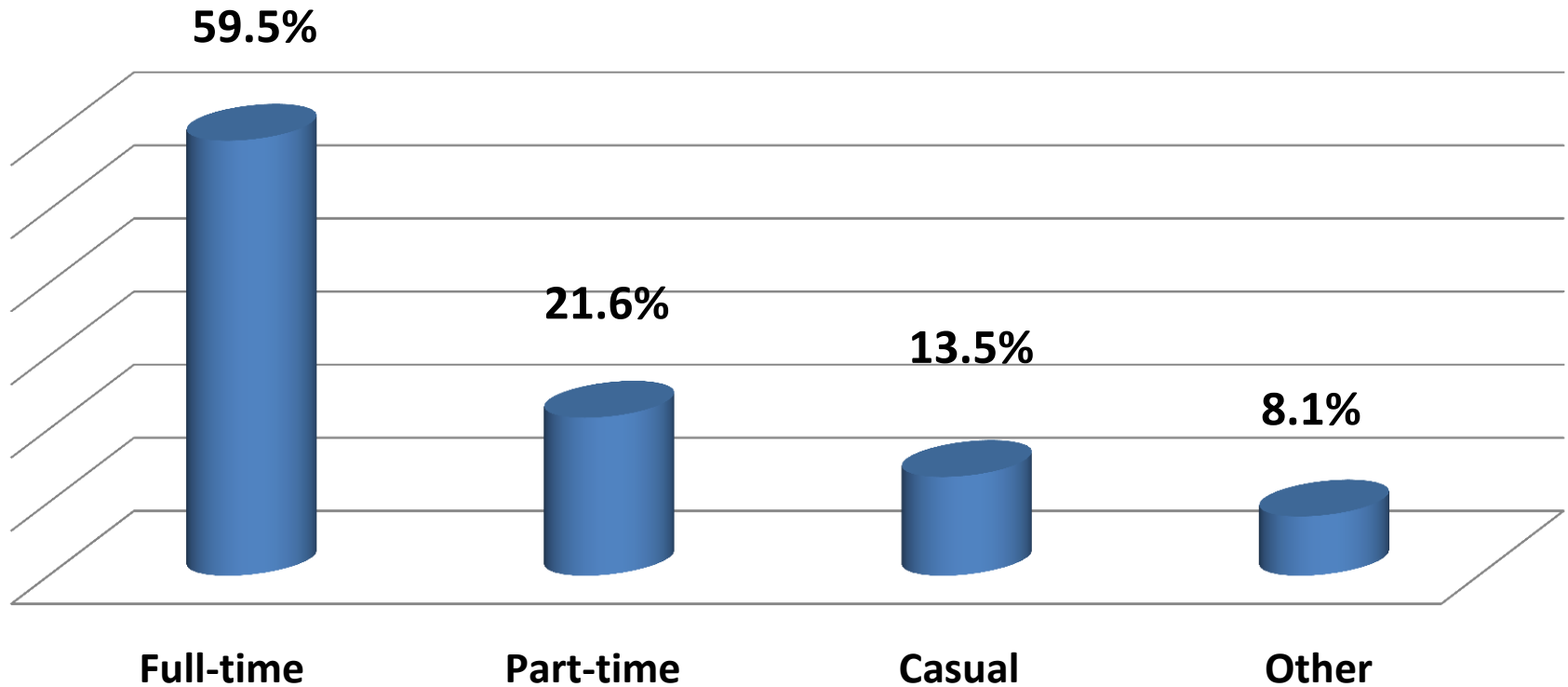
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Length of time working for current organisation



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Employment status



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Scope of programs



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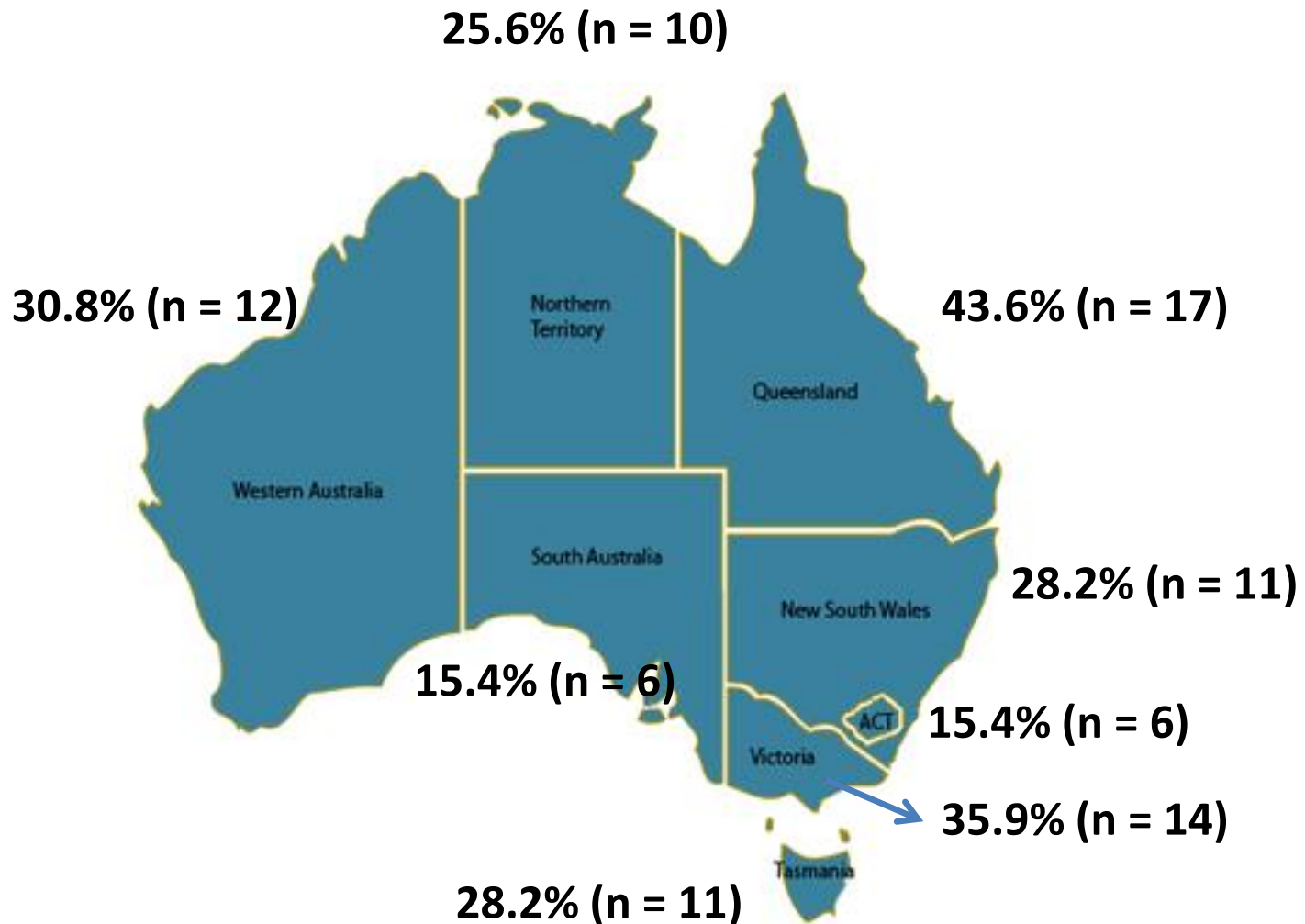


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Where are programs delivered?



Where are programs delivered?

- In multiple states / territories 24.2%
- In only one state / territory 21.2%
- Nationwide 18.2%
- One area within a state / territory 18.2%
- Other 18.2%

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Where are programs delivered?

- Regional areas 81.8%
- Metropolitan areas 75.8%
- Remote areas 63.6%
- Other 12.1%

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**Approximately how many children
are reached by programs in Australia
each year?**



431,720

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How many primary school-aged children are there in Australia?



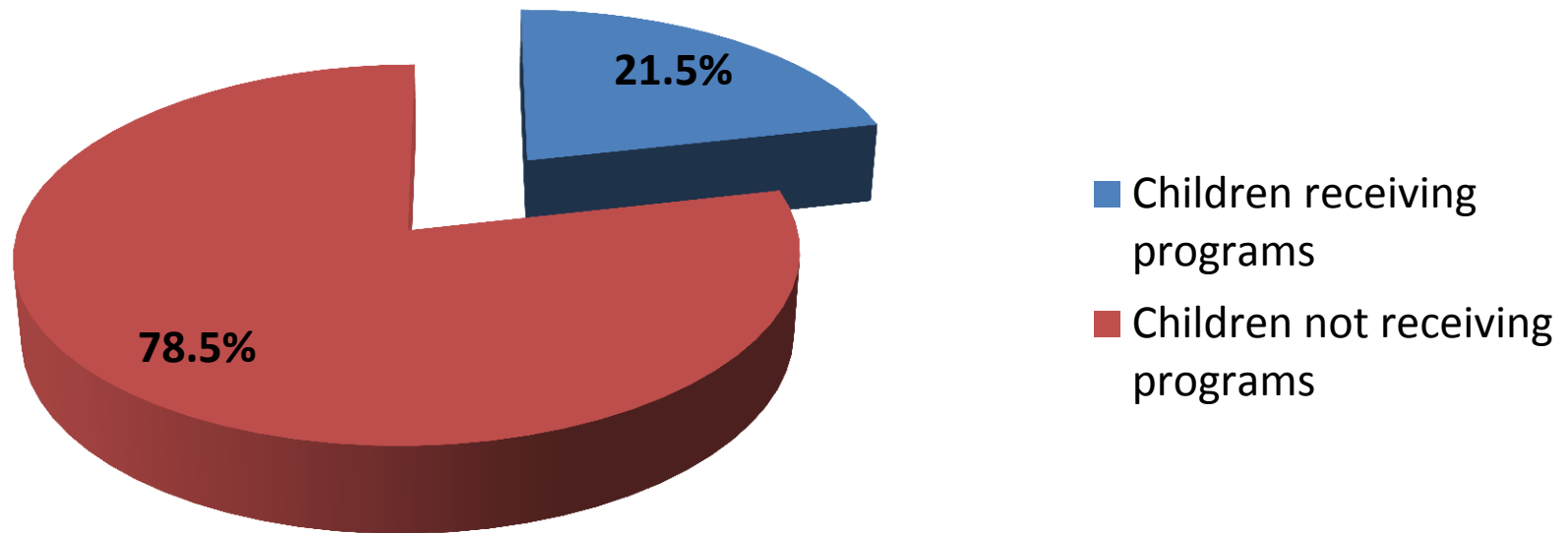
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Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011

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Proportion of Australian children receiving programs each year?

Primary school-aged children



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Program Content



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Content always covered by >70% of programs:

Always tell a trusted adult *	89.7%
Offenders may be people they know / trust *	79.5%
Children are not to blame *	74.4%
How to recognise abusive situations *	71.8%

* Core concepts – concepts about which there is some evidence of effectiveness

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Content always covered by >70% of programs (continued):

How to identify a trusted adult ^	84.6%
Children's bodies belong to them ^	79.5%
Adults can sometimes act inappropriately ^	76.9%
It's OK to say 'No' to touch ^	76.9%
Identifying feelings ^	76.9%
Both boys and girls can be abused ^	74.4%
Identifying the body's warning signs ^	74.4%
Types of secrets and / or surprises ^	74.4%

^ Common concepts – other concepts identified as common features of CSA prevention programs but without evidence of effectiveness.

Content always covered by >60% of programs

Abuse can involve touch and non-touch experiences * 69.2%

Distinguishing appropriate and inappropriate touch ^ 69.2%

The 'no, go, tell' sequence ^ 69.2%

* Core concepts

^ Common concepts

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Content always covered by <50% of programs

Abusive touch may sometimes feel nice *	46.2%
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Perpetrator strategies (e.g. grooming) ^	48.7%
--	-------

Correct anatomical terms for identifying private parts ^	48.7%
--	-------

Safety with technology (e.g. msn, mobile phones) ^	43.6%
--	-------

* Core concepts

^ Common concepts

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Teaching Strategies



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Teaching strategies always used by >80% of programs

Repetition of key messages

87.2%

Teaching strategies always used by >70% of programs

Active participation *

74.4%

* Core methods – methods where there is some evidence of effectiveness

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Teaching strategies always used by >60% of programs

Demonstrating prevention strategies *

66.7%

Teaching strategies always used by >50% of programs

Practice of prevention skills by children *

59.0%

* Core methods

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Teaching strategies always used by <50% of programs

Building messages across year levels	48.7%
Group discussions	35.9%
Formal lectures	10.3%

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Resources



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Resources always used by >50% of programs

Workbook / worksheets	53.8%
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Resources always used by < 50% of programs

Games/ picture cards / posters	46.2%
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Story / picture books / comics	41.0%
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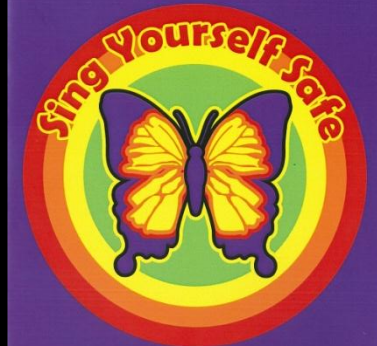
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Resources always used by <40% of programs

Theatre presentation / performance / play / demonstration	33.3%
Photos / drawings	30.8%
Puppets / characters	23.1%
Multimedia / computer-based instruction	20.5%
Video / DVD	17.9%
Homework	12.8%
Anatomically correct dolls	2.6%

An interesting finding

Songs ...



Barriers



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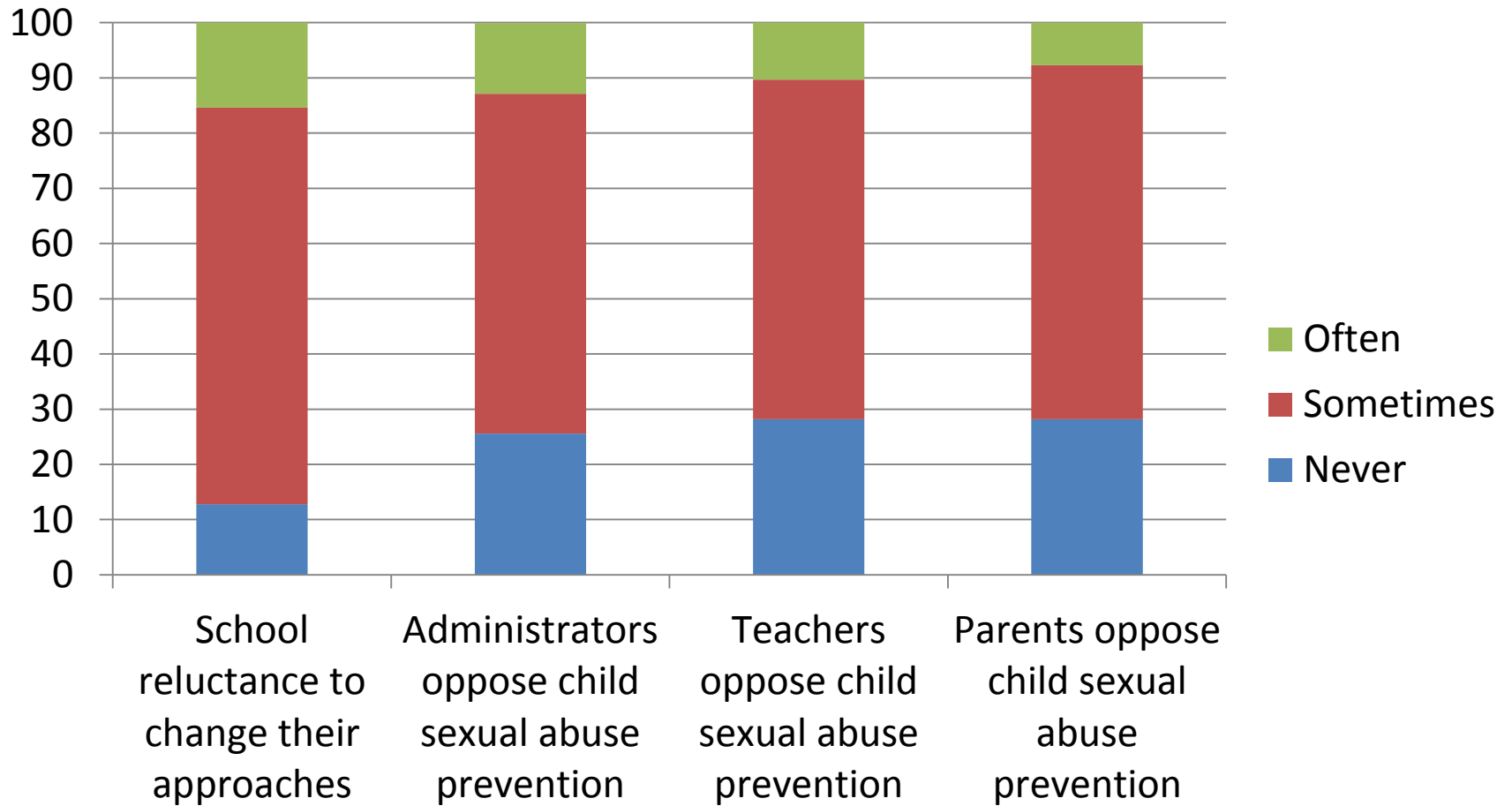


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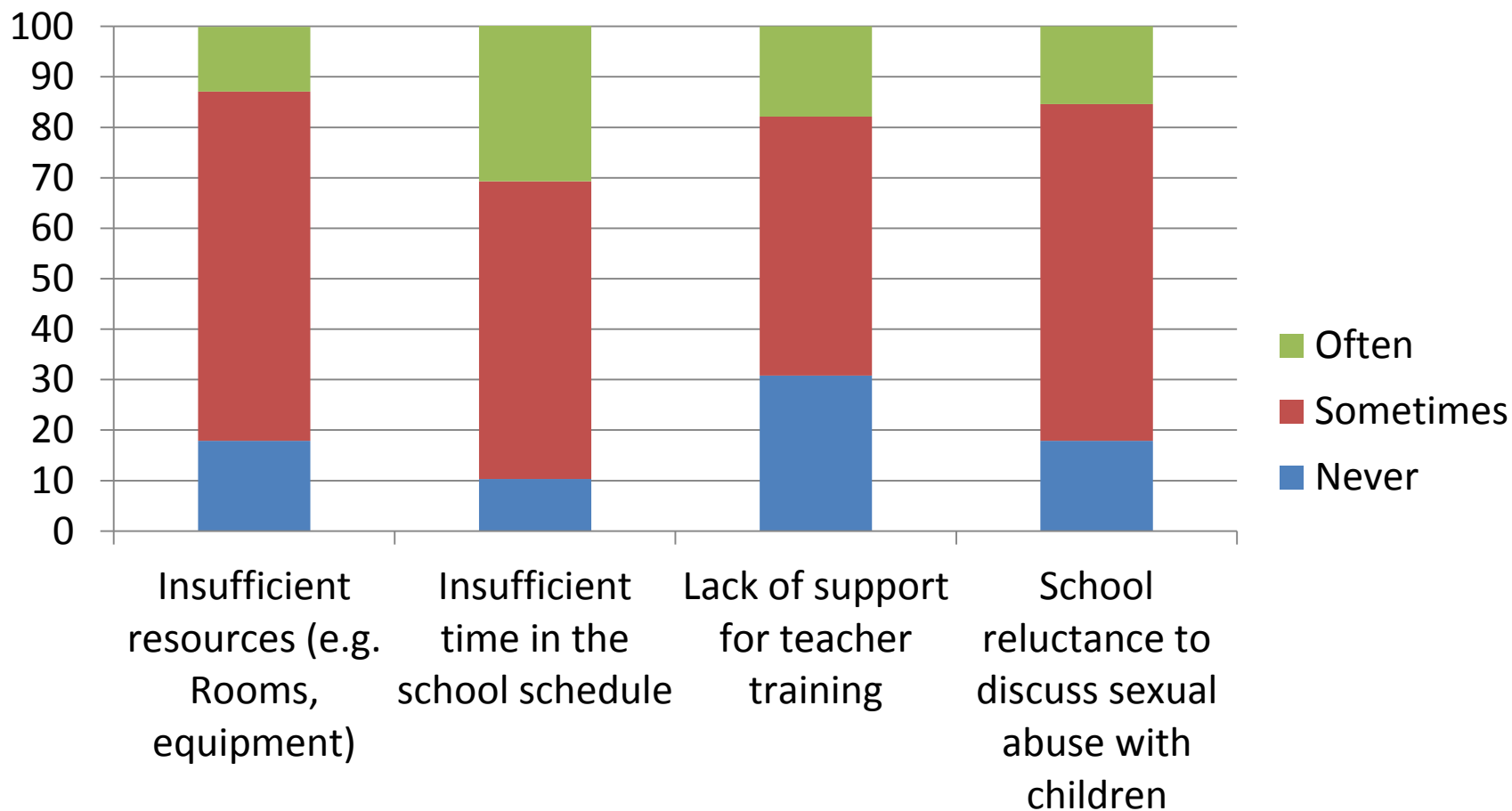


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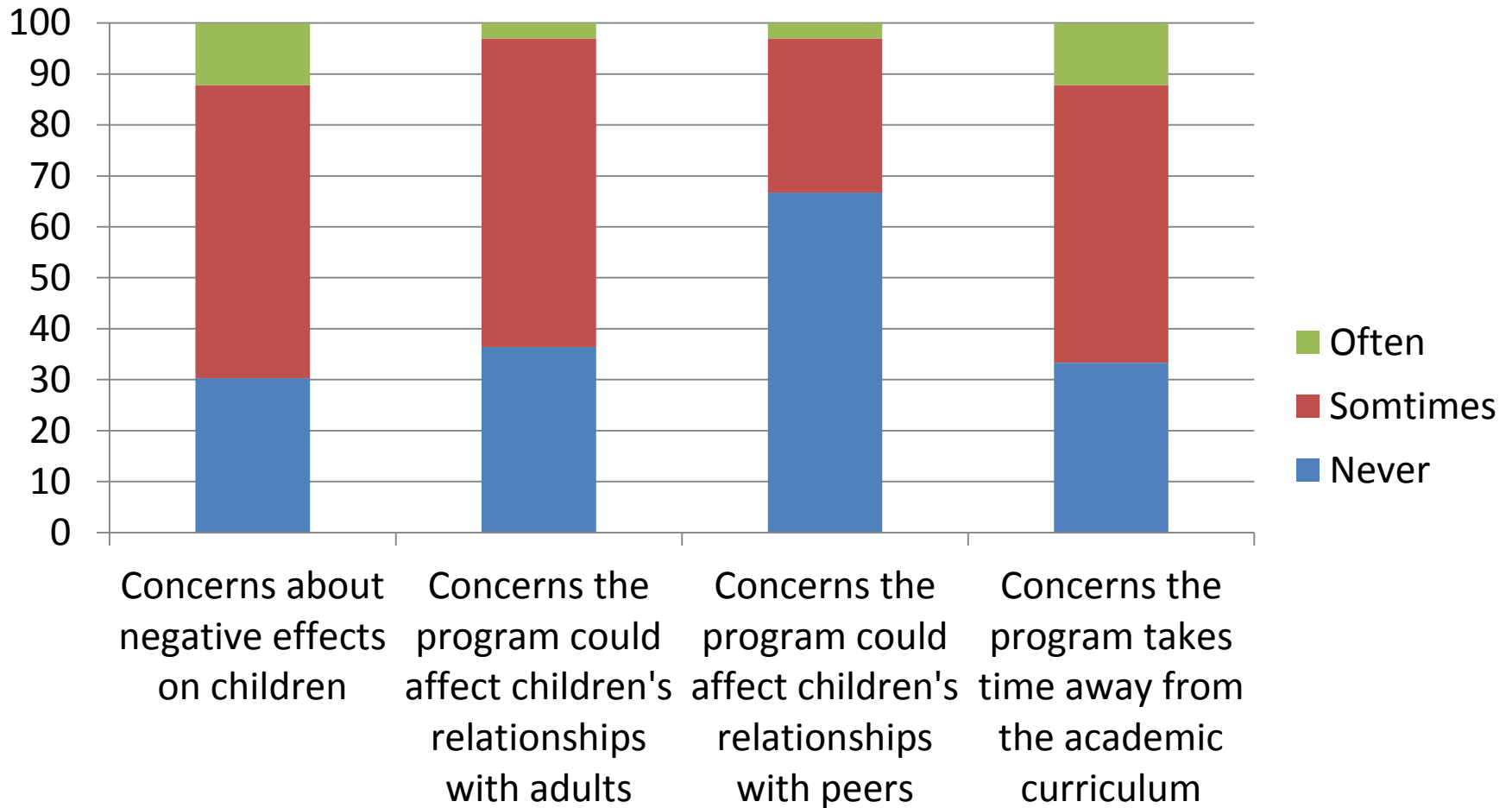
Facilitators



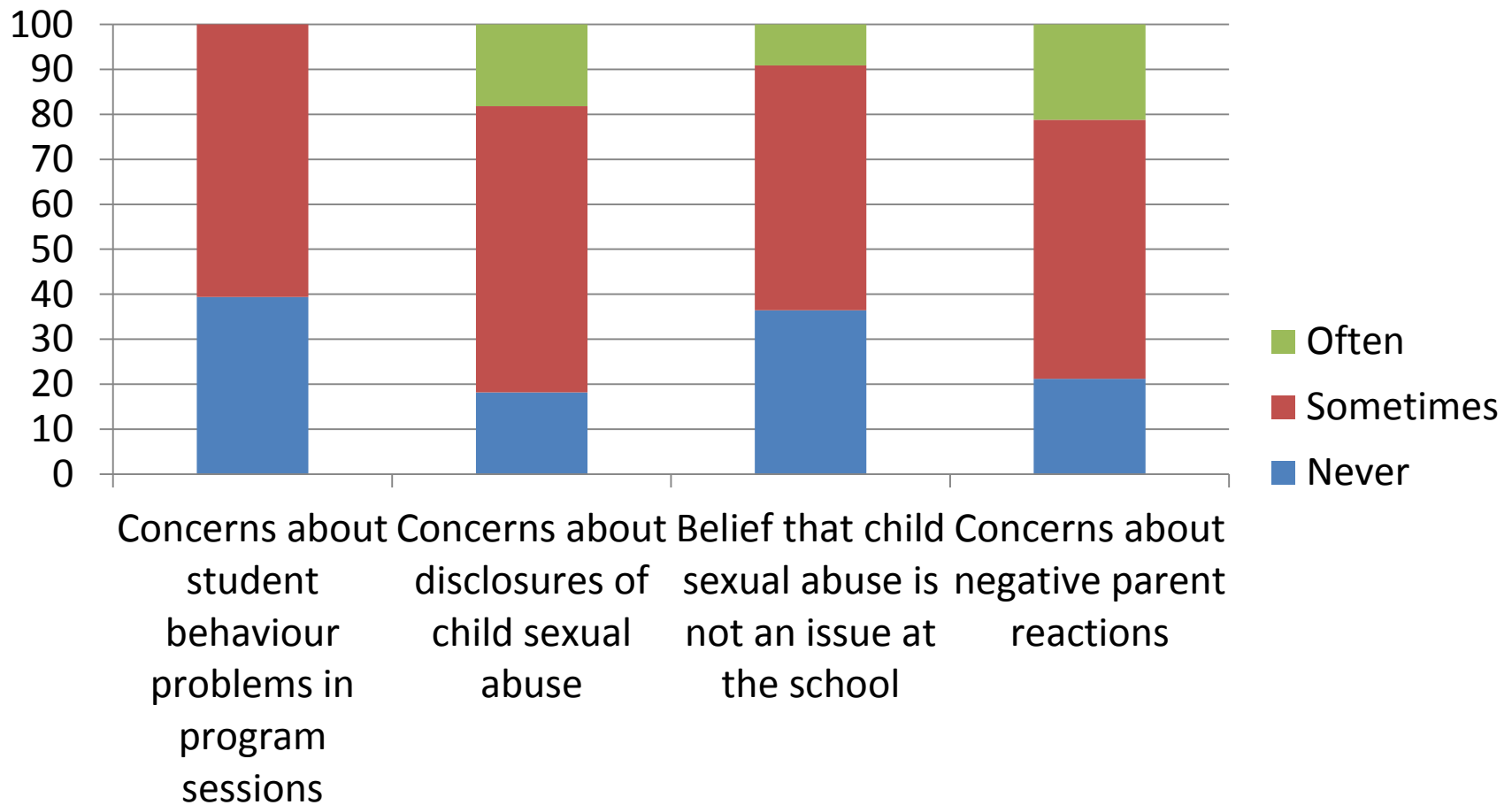
Facilitators (continued)



Coordinators



Coordinators (continued)



Facilitators



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Factors for successfully delivering programs in schools declared “very important” by >60%

Support from teaching staff	79.5%
Time allocated in the regular school schedule	74.4%
Belief that teaching child sexual abuse prevention is necessary	64.1%
Support from parents	61.5%

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Factors for successfully delivering programs in schools declared “very important” by >50%

School staff participate in training	56.4%
Child protection is compulsory in the school curriculum	56.4%
A “champion” in the school who advocates for child sexual abuse prevention	56.4%
Teachers participate in program delivery	53.8%

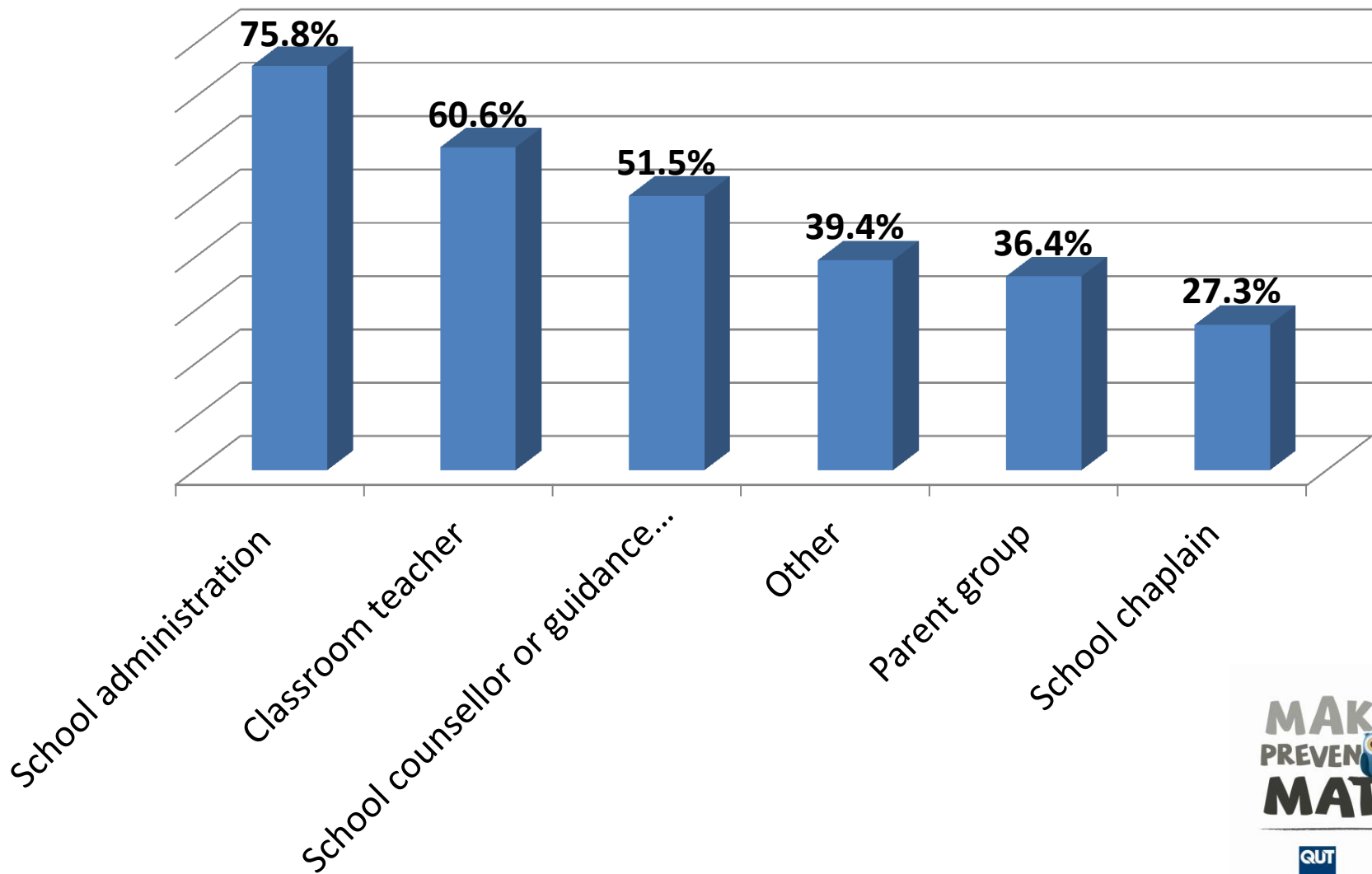
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Factors for successfully delivering programs in schools declared “very important” by <50%

Support from school administration	48.7%
High levels of awareness about child sexual abuse	41.0%
History of being active in child sexual abuse prevention	25.6%

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People who initiate or drive program use



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